PATENT
5007-00700

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application for Reissue of Utility Patent to: §
Ashby, III et al. §
§
Patent No. 5,852,803 §
Issued: December 22, 1998 §
§
Title: APPARATUS, SYSTEM AND §
METHOD FOR RECORDING §
AND/OR RETRIEVING AUDIO §
INFORMATION §

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Derrick Brown

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir/Madam:

This amendment is submitted concurrently with the above-captioned reissue application. Remarks as to the status of all claims and support in the disclosure for changes to the claims are also included herein.

Please amend the application as listed below.

In the claims

Please add the following claims:

5. An instructional apparatus, comprising:

a memory medium storing a vocal message prerecorded as telephone quality voice input; and

a playback terminal linked by a transmissive path to the memory medium, wherein the playback terminal is adapted to reproducibly retrieve the vocal message from the memory medium upon receiving from a bar code reader a bar code signal corresponding to the vocal message, wherein the bar code signal results from scanning of a bar code label attachable to a product, and wherein the vocal message is indicative of an identifiable characteristic associated with the product.

6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the memory medium is located at a site remote from that of the playback terminal, and wherein the transmissive path comprises a radio-linked or infrared-linked path.

7. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the memory medium comprises one or more compact disks.

8. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the vocal message is prerecorded by a manufacturer of the product.

9. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the vocal message comprises a voice familiar to a user of the product.

10. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the identifiable characteristic associated with the product comprises the content of the product.

11. The apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a speaker coupled to the playback terminal, wherein the speaker is operable to reproduce and vocalize the vocal message as telephone quality voice output.

12. A method for providing product information, said method comprising:

receiving a bar code signal from a bar code reader, wherein the bar code signal results from scanning of a bar code label attachable to a product; and

retrieving a prerecorded vocal message corresponding to the bar code signal from a memory medium, wherein the vocal message is prerecorded as telephone quality voice input, and wherein the vocal message is indicative of an identifiable characteristic associated with the product.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said retrieving comprises receiving the vocal message from the memory medium over a radio-linked or infrared-linked path to a remote location.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the memory medium comprises one or more compact disks.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the vocal message is prerecorded by a manufacturer of the product.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the vocal message comprises a voice familiar to a user of the product.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the identifiable characteristic associated with the product comprises the content of the product.

18. An instructional apparatus, comprising:

a memory medium storing a prerecorded, non-synthesized audio signal; and

a playback terminal linked by a transmissive path to the memory medium, wherein the playback terminal is adapted to reproducibly retrieve the audio signal from the memory medium upon receiving from a bar code reader a bar code signal corresponding to the audio signal, wherein the bar code signal results from scanning of a bar code label attachable to a product, and wherein the audio signal is indicative of an identifiable characteristic associated with the product.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the memory medium is located at a site remote from that of the playback terminal, and wherein the transmissive path comprises a radio-linked or infrared-linked path.

20. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the memory medium comprises one or more compact disks.

21. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the audio signal is prerecorded by a manufacturer of the product.

22. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the identifiable characteristic associated with the product comprises the content of the product.

23. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a speaker coupled to the playback terminal, wherein the speaker is operable to reproduce and make audible the audio signal as telephone quality audio output.

24. A method for providing product information, said method comprising:

receiving a bar code signal from a bar code reader, wherein the bar code signal results from scanning of a bar code label attachable to a product; and

retrieving a prerecorded, non-synthesized audio signal corresponding to the bar code signal from a memory medium, wherein the audio signal is indicative of an identifiable characteristic associated with the product.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein said retrieving comprises receiving the audio signal from the memory medium over a radio-linked or infrared-linked path to a remote location.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the memory medium comprises one or more compact disks.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein the audio signal is prerecorded by a manufacturer of the product.

28. The method of claim 24, wherein the identifiable characteristic associated with the product comprises the content of the product.

29. An instructional apparatus, comprising:

a bar code reader operable to scan a bar code label attachable to a product and produce a corresponding bar code signal;

a listening station comprising a speaker and coupled to the bar code reader, wherein the listening station is adapted to receive the bar code signal from the bar code reader, to receive a vocal message corresponding to the bar code signal, and to reproduce and vocalize the vocal message, wherein the vocal message is prerecorded as telephone quality voice input, and wherein the vocal message is indicative of an identifiable characteristic associated with the product; and

a retrieval system remotely coupled to the listening station, wherein the retrieval system comprises a memory medium storing the vocal message, and wherein the retrieval system is adapted to reproducibly retrieve the vocal message from the memory medium and transmit the vocal message to the listening station.

30. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the retrieval system is remotely coupled to the listening station using a radio-linked or infrared-linked path.

31. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the memory medium comprises one or more compact disks.

32. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the vocal message is prerecorded by a manufacturer of the product.

33. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the vocal message comprises a voice familiar to a user of the product.

34. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the identifiable characteristic associated with the product comprises the content of the product.

35. An instructional apparatus, comprising:

a bar code reader operable to scan a bar code label attachable to a product and produce a corresponding bar code signal;

a listening station comprising a speaker and coupled to the bar code reader, wherein the listening station is adapted to receive the bar code signal from the bar code reader, to receive a non-synthesized prerecorded audio signal corresponding to the bar code signal, and to reproduce and make audible the audio signal, wherein the audio signal is indicative of an identifiable characteristic associated with the product; and

a retrieval system remotely coupled to the listening station, wherein the retrieval system comprises a memory medium storing the audio signal, and wherein the retrieval system is adapted to reproducibly retrieve the audio signal from the memory medium and transmit the audio signal to the listening station.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the retrieval system is remotely coupled to the listening station using a radio-linked or infrared-linked path.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the memory medium comprises one or more compact disks.

38. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the audio signal is prerecorded by a manufacturer of the product.

39. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the identifiable characteristic associated with the product comprises the content of the product.

REMARKS

Claims 5-39 have been added. Thus, claims 1-35 are currently pending in the case. As discussed further in a declaration submitted concurrently with the above-captioned reissue application and this amendment, at least some of claims 5-39 are believed to be broadened as compared to the claims of the original patent. The added claims are asserted to be supported by the disclosure of the patent, as discussed further below.

Support for added claim 5 may be found in at least columns 9 and 10, Fig. 11, and claim 4 of the disclosure. A memory medium storing a vocal message, for example, is described in column 10: "Central computer 78 accesses various memory media such as hard disk drive 81, CD ROM 82, floppy disk or RAM card 84 as shown in Fig. 11. A plurality of vocal messages can be stored in the memory medium and addressed by computer 78 to operate as a voice recorder...or to retrieve verbal messages placed therein" (Column 10--lines 31-38). The prerecording of the vocal message as telephone quality voice input is included in claim 4 of the original patent, and, for example, in col. 3, lines 5-18. The claimed playback terminal is disclosed as terminal 74 of Fig. 11 and described from col. 9, line 31 to col. 11, line 7. Claim 12 describes a method which may be performed by the playback terminal of claim 5, and is also supported at least by Fig. 11 and the related text, and by claim 4.

The limitation of claims 6 and 13 that the memory medium be in a location remote from the playback terminal is supported in col. 10: "If the amount of vocal information is extremely large, drive 80, ROM 82 and floppy or RAM card 84 can be placed at a remote site with access using electrode-lead contacts, radio-linked or infrared-linked transmissive paths..." (Column 10, lines 54-57). The limitation of claims 7 and 14 that the memory medium comprise one or more compact disks is supported by at least col. 10, lines 31-34 as quoted above. Support for the limitation of claims 8 and 15 that the vocal message is prerecorded by a manufacturer of the product may be found, for example, in col. 1: "Alternatively, the manufacturer, instructor or consumer can record his voice concerning the product corresponding to a bar code placed upon the product" (Col. 1, line 66-col. 2, line 1). Support for the limitation of claims 9 and 16 that the vocal message comprises a voice familiar to a user of the product may be found, for example, in

col. 9: "The familiarity of a human voice (possibly the user's own voice" provides a substantial advantage over synthesized voice. Not only is actual recorded voice clearer than synthesized voice, but it can be recorded in, for example, the user's foreign language in a form familiar to the user" (Col. 9, lines 54-59). Support for the limitation of claims 10 and 17 that the identifiable characteristic comprises the content of the product may be found, for example, in col. 9: "Identifiable characteristics such as the contents of the product, type of product or instructions for use of the product being scanned are all verbally delivered to the consumer..." (Col. 9, lines 44-47). Support for the limitation of claim 11 that the apparatus further comprises a speaker operable to reproduce and vocalize the vocal message as telephone quality voice output may be found, for example, in claim 4 of the original patent.

Added claims 18-23 are similar to added claims 5-8 and 10-11, and support for most aspects of claims 18-23 may be found in the corresponding locations discussed above for claims 5-8 and 10-11. Claims 18-23 differ from claims 5-8 and 10-11 by reciting a "prerecorded non-synthesized audio signal" instead of a "vocal message prerecorded as telephone quality voice input". This aspect of claims 18-23 is the only one for which the above discussion of claims 5-8 and 10-11 does not provide support. Although many embodiments described in the disclosure refer to vocal messages, it is indicated in various places in the disclosure that a more general audio signal may be used. For example, "Voice or audio information can be transmitted and stored inside the label for subsequent playback or retrieval by the consumer" (Col. 1, lines 60-62). Furthermore, "The bar code can be read and audio information corresponding to that bar code be output to the consumer..." (col. 2, lines 1-3). In addition, "Audio signals or vocal messages can be sent to the label where those signals are then recorded within the recorder" (column 4, lines 14-15). The limitation that the audio signal be non-synthesized is supported in, for example, col. 3, lines 10-18, or col. 9, lines 50-59.

Added claims 24-28 are similar to added claims 12-15 and 17, and support for most aspects of claims 24-28 may be found in the corresponding locations discussed above with respect to claims 12-15 and 17. The only aspect of claims 24-28 for which the discussion of claims 12-15 and 17 does not provide support is the use of "prerecorded non-synthesized audio

signal" instead of "vocal message prerecorded as telephone quality voice input". This limitation is supported in the disclosure, however, as discussed above for claims 18-23.

Added claim 29 includes a bar code reader, a listening station and a remotely coupled retrieval system comprising a memory medium. Support for the bar code reader and the listening station may be found in Fig. 11 and the related text in the specification. The bar code reader may correspond to wand 80 in Fig. 11, and the listening station may correspond to terminal 74. As noted in col. 10, lines 54-65, memory media such as CD ROM 82 may be located at a remote site with respect to terminal 74. A retrieval system including such a memory medium at the remote site is therefore inherent to the disclosure, in that such a retrieval system would be used to locate the vocal message corresponding to the scanned bar code and transmit the message to the listening station for playback. Claims 30-34 are similar to other claims such as claims 6-10, and are supported by the corresponding parts of the disclosure discussed above with reference to these other claims. Claim 35 differs from claim 29 only in that a "non-synthesized prerecorded audio signal" is referred to instead of a "vocal signal prerecorded as telephone quality voice input". As noted above with respect to claim 18, the claimed audio signal is supported by the disclosure. Claims 36-39 are similar to other claims such as claims 19-22, and are supported by the corresponding parts of the disclosure discussed above with reference to these other claims.

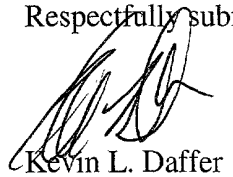
For at least the reasons set forth above, added claims 5-39 are believed to be supported by the disclosure.

CONCLUSION

In this amendment, claims 5-39 have been added and the status of the current claims and the support in the disclosure for the added claims have been addressed. Favorable consideration of the current reissue application is therefore respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions, comments, or suggestions, the undersigned attorney earnestly requests a telephone conference.

No fees are believed to be required for filing this amendment; however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees, which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Conley, Rose & Tayon, P.C. Deposit Account No. 50-1505/5007-00700.

Respectfully submitted,



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